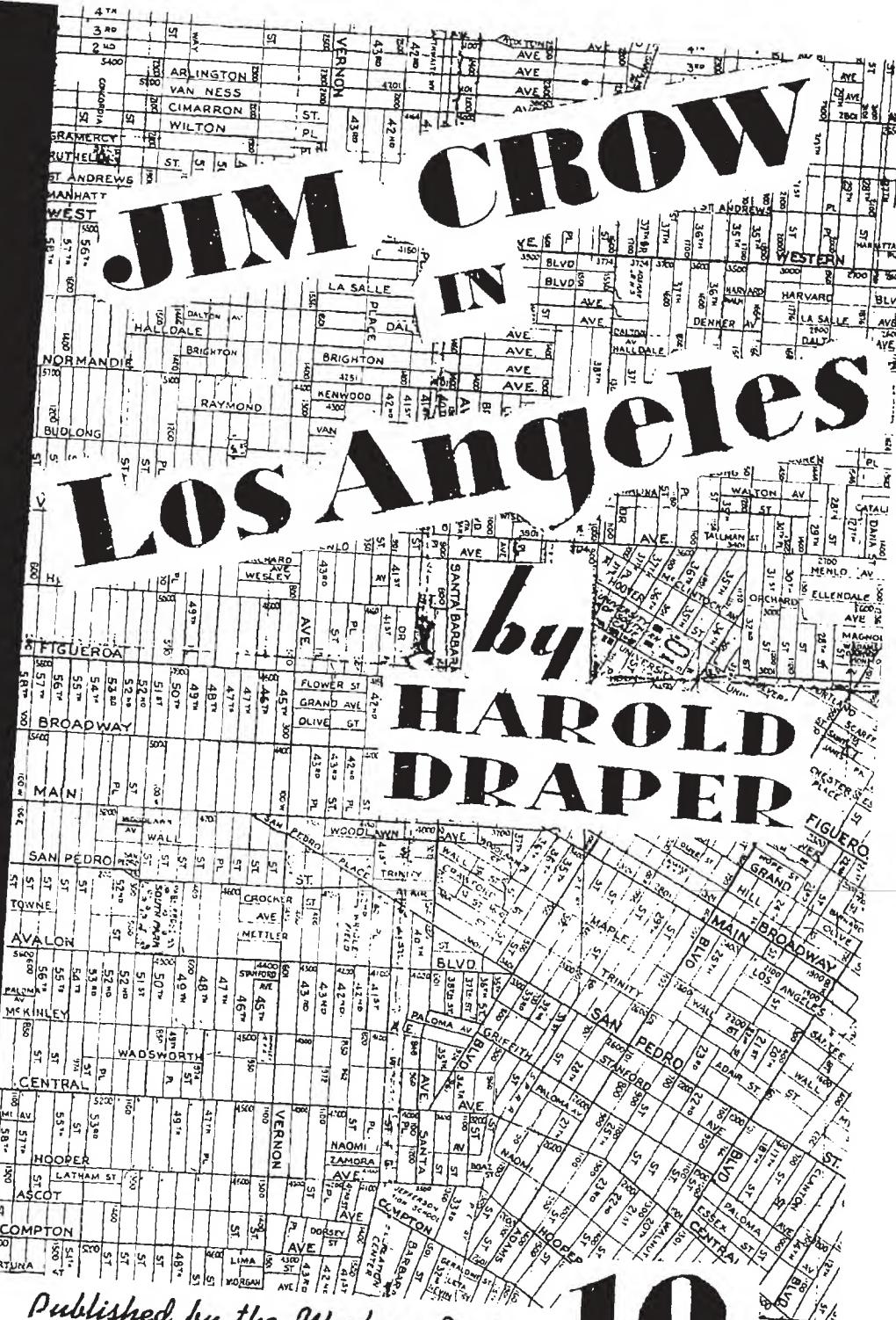


# JIM CROW IN Los Angeles

by  
HAROLD DRAPER



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## **Foreword**

**FREEDOM BEGINS AT HOME.**

Today, in the South, men are hunted and lynched by mobs, a man is beaten into blindness, helpless women are shot down in cold blood—all because their skin is dark—

Today, the second "war for democracy" has left less democracy than before in a terrorized Europe—

Today, everyone must be told of the crimes being committed against the Negro people under our very noses, in the city of Los Angeles. That is the job of this pamphlet.

Its author, Hal Draper, has been in the forefront of the fight against race hatred in this city, in words and action. His pamphlet, "The Truth About Gerald Smith," is still the only full-length exposé of America's No. 1 fascist. As Los Angeles organizer of the Workers Party, he led the first mass-picket demonstration against Fascist Smith in June, 1945.

Jim Crow is not a local Los Angeles question but a national evil that splotches the entire country. But the fight for freedom begins at home. This pamphlet will make better fighters against Jim Crow. When we understand the roots of the evil, we will be able to tear it out of the soil that nourishes it.

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## **JIM CROW IN LOS ANGELES**

Over a hundred thousand people in Los Angeles live in a concentration camp.

Not the kind you read about over in Europe. No barbed wire, no gas chambers. That isn't the only thing that makes a concentration camp.

Racial segregation, restriction of liberty, brutality in uniform, vigilante storm-troopers on the loose—these make the concentration camps that exist in American cities, and in Los Angeles.

They are the Jim Crow ghettos. Behind them is the shadow of barbed wire and totalitarianism.

That's pretty strong language. Is it justified? After all, John Smith, white American, was brought up to think that it's only right for colored people to live with their own and not to mix with white folks.

That's not prejudice, says John Smith, that's just the way things ought to be.

We'll get around to talking about the way things ought to be. Let's start by seeing how things ARE.

### **Home, Sweet Home**

First of all, did you ever try living in a chicken coop—you and your family?

Things are tough all over, and maybe you don't have an extra bedroom for Junior. But—

"Spot surveys in some sections indicated nearly all available garages, sheds, and in some cases even chicken coops were occupied for living quarters."

That's the City Health Department reporting on the south-

central Negro district for 1944-45. People are living there like prisoners in a concentration camp, not because they want to, but because they are chained there by racial segregation.

**Here's the whole picture:**

During the war years, the demand for labor brought a quarter million newcomers to Los Angeles. Seventy thousand Negro people came along with the rest. Without them, the city could not have boomed into the major industrial area it is now.

**The Negro population of Los Angeles more than doubled from 1940 to 1946—from about 63,000 to over 133,000.**

Their labor was welcomed, the fat war contracts and free government plants could now grind out the profits for industry. But were they given a chance to live decently?

Even back in 1940 more than 84 per cent of the Negro population were living in the area of poorest housing in the city. Then when the influx started—

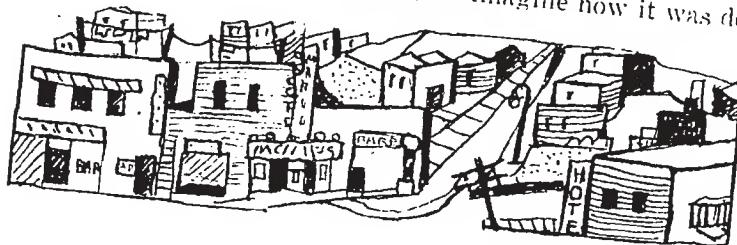
Of the quarter-million arrivals, three-fourths had the whole city to settle in because their complexions were whitish. Even so, we all know what the squeeze was like.

**The other fourth, the Negro workers, had to squash into the limited number of sections open to non-whites—the very sections that were already the most crowded in the city!**

A Negro population that had doubled, as the result of the appeal to keep the war industries going, was jack-knifed into the overflowing ghetto by the Jim Crow system of "restrictive covenants."

If you want it in official language, here's the City Housing Authority reporting to the Mayor on September 17, 1945: "We therefore have approximately 125,000 people living, for the most part, in shelter facilities which were primarily substandard and seriously overcrowded when they housed only 67,000 people before the war."

*That sounds impossible. Just try to imagine how it was done!*



The "secret" is explained by such things as a public health nurse's report which gives typical cases like the following: A family of eleven, including eight children and a new infant, live in a garage, sleeping two and three together in bunk beds, with no running water, bath or toilet except in the front house.

There is not an inch of space to which they can escape from this inhuman existence without crossing the magic line of the Jim Crow ghetto.

**Jim Crow Over the Housing Projects**

The family in the above case was waiting for a vacancy in the Aliso Village housing project. So are thousands of others—5,465 of them. This is the number of eligible applicants that were waiting as of September 1, 1945, and actually 59 per cent of them were Negro families.

Public housing projects provided homes for only about 9,000 Negroes. Private housing developments accounted for possibly 2,000 more. That is why around 50,000 were condemned to live in garages, chicken coops and crowded quarters.

*Are the city housing projects open to Negroes?* At least three are deliberately kept lily-white, at the demand of the real estate boards and banks. That does not mean that the others are "open."

**There is a racial quota.**

This system was legal and official up to about 1941. Now it is just "understood" practice. If a Negro family moves out, another moves in—no more. The quota may vary from 2 to 15 per cent or it may be only a token family or two. But there is no room for the expansion of the Negro population in such projects.

The overwhelming majority of Negro families which are settled in projects are to be found in the temporary units—jerry-built houses which unavoidably degenerate into near-slums a year after erection. As the *Los Angeles Sentinel* reported: "It is estimated that members of the Negro race are some 300 per cent worse off than members of the white race in regard to housing. This has reflected in a growth of crime and illness figures in the crowded Negro districts which has caused a staggering financial loss to the entire community."

Anybody who talks nice words about "interracial understanding" is talking up a spout as long as the Jim Crow practices which bring such conditions about, are winked at.

## **Behind the Restrictive Covenants**

The heart of this vicious system is the instrument known as the restrictive covenant.

This is a "private" agreement by householders in a particular area. It binds them and their successors to refuse to rent or sell to non-whites. The courts enforce these Jim Crow contracts. A present owner cannot rent or sell to a Negro even if he wants to, because of a covenant made 25 years ago by somebody else. Even if a Negro owns the property, he cannot use or occupy it.

**The United States, "home of the free," according to the song, is the ONLY nation in the world where a citizen can be deprived, solely for his race and color, of the right to live in his own home. That is the fact—the rest is only a song.**

The present drive to renew and extend restrictive covenants is not exactly a spontaneous movement by indignant householders. *What are the forces behind them, seeking to line up white home-owners in a Jim Crow front?*

*In the first place, the banks and other lending institutions,* anxious to preserve their investments on real estate loans. The Bank of America and the Security-First National Bank are prime movers but not the only ones. Their method is to refuse to finance loans unless the area is restricted, thus forcing action.

*Second, the real estate boards,* for similar reasons. The Southwest Realty Board, for example, has probably given the financial backing for every covenant organized in that district. Although the myth that Negro occupancy automatically lowers property values has been exploded by a survey of the National Association of Real Estate Boards in 147 cities, the real estate salesmen still like to use restriction as a selling point.

*Third, the federal government, through the Federal Housing Authority,* which acts in this respect as the executive committee of the real estate operators, but with the public's money.



Besides guaranteeing loans on race-restricted property, the FHA has actually "recommended insertion of race restrictive covenants as a pre-condition for its guarantee of loans," reported Loren Miller of the NAACP to a national conference last May. Since that time the FHA has deleted this from its manual but it is still to be seen whether its local offices will change the actual practice.

*Fourth, particular moneyed powers with vested interests.* Last May the magazine *Now* lifted the lid on the drive for a restrictive covenant in the square mile area bounded by Washington Boulevard, Grand, Exposition and Vermont, in the heart of the city. This area contains a large amount of property tied up with investments of the University of Southern California and the Automobile Club of S. C. In addition, Chancellor KleinSmid of USC and the Doheny oil family have mansions here. These three powers were squarely behind the anti-Negro campaign. The Auto Club's legal department was handing out blank agreements and recruiting canvassers and admitted working in close collaboration with USC authorities. At USC, every fraternity and sorority had signed up, except a Jewish sorority.

## **From the USC to the KKK**

The role of the USC deserves an extra word. While it has Negro students, its school of medicine rigidly excludes them; it has drawn the color line on the athletic field for 15 years; it uses a textbook on eugenics which preaches racism and Negro inferiority; its dormitories are Jim Crow. With all this, it is more distinguished for football teams than for education, in which its standing is notoriously low. And up to a recent revolt of its faculty (which was hushed up), its professors and instructors were being paid salaries which were among the lowest in the country. *There's the combination: Jim Crow, poor education, economic exploitation and lots of rah rah—all in a university, mind you; not an ordinary sweatshop.*

Getting back to covenants, we list *fifthly—plain racketeering.* A fly-by-nighter sets up as a realtor, circulates covenant agreements, and charges two to five dollars for the "privilege" of signing, to cover the legal processing. A number of race-baiting numbskulls can even be induced to do the actual work of

canvassing for the "cause" while the operator collects the soft fees.

*Sixth on the parade is—the Ku Klux Klan.* The Klan revival in this state began last March with fiery crosses in Big Bear Valley and an American Legion meeting there where an avowed Klan spokesman, Rev. Swift, declared: "We intend to form restrictive covenants here and elsewhere in order to hold the line of pure Americanism." More on that later.

*From finance capital to the underworld*—that is where our list has brought us. And in such a set-up you can be sure that the capitalist politicians are not missing, although they are the bashful boys who don't like their faces to show in such goings-on. An exception is a gentleman named McIntyre Faries, who was the Southern California head of the campaign for Governor Warren's election. This "friend of the peep-ul" is one of the top leaders of the restrictive-covenant group in South Pasadena. To complete the circle, his law firm is also the counsel for the City Housing Authority in Los Angeles! *Do you get the picture?*



But the expanding drive from within the bursting Negro community is making its way. In 1945 more lawsuits challenging restrictive covenants were filed by Negroes in this city than by Negroes in all the rest of the country. The Central Avenue district is moving west, to Broadway. The so-called Jefferson tract on the west side is moving east, to Vermont Avenue. Restrictive covenants are bulging at the seams.

As this is written, the possibility exists that the California Supreme Court may declare the race covenant unconstitutional and illegal, as it clearly is. If and when this occurs, the Jim Crow drive may be expected to shift from the "legal" instrument of segregation, the covenant, to a flare-up of racist violence and

intimidation—encouraged by the money powers but carried out by such agencies as the Klan and local vigilante terrorists.

Such is the connection between "respectable" Jim Crow (as practiced by the banks and real estate gougers) and race violence. The latter is brought to play when the other is knocked on the head. *The fight will shift from the courts to the field of defense against terrorist gangs.*

### Old Jim Crow on the Job

There is a "restrictive covenant" in the industrial plants too.

*Last hired, first fired:* as soon as the "war for democracy" and its labor shortage was over, the Jim Crow pattern began to snap back.

Partly, it was automatic, because Jim Crow creates a vicious circle. Being among the last hired, Negro workers were among the earliest laid off. Being given little opportunity for all-around training under conditions of war production and race prejudice, they were the more easily weeded out when industry could afford to pick and choose. Then the FEPC was killed in Congress by the Democratic-Republican coalition and all vestige of restraint was removed.

Or if it wasn't automatic, a shove was given. For example, at the local Todd shipyard in the month following V-J Day, Negro welders, especially women, were fired even against union seniority rules. This was done through the pretext of a welding re-test; the government's Navy inspectors cooperated by inspecting the color of the welder rather than the test-plate.

Here you have the reason why fully one-quarter of all job applicants were "non-white" in the U. S. Employment Service in Los Angeles as of last January. This is grossly out of proportion to their six per cent of the population. By now, the proportion of Negro unemployment is probably even higher.

The local USES acknowledges that their February survey "reveals a higher percentage of openly acknowledged discrimination than had ever been previously recorded." Nearly a third of the job orders in the manufacturing field excluded Negroes. Nearly a quarter of all job orders were discriminatory. This, mind you, counts only employers who put down their prejudice on paper and sign their names to it. The USES policy is to co-

operate in such race discrimination as the agent for the employer.

**The Negro worker is being pushed back into the economic blind alleys marked out for him by the economic rulers of our society!**

All the jabberwocky that was handed out during the war about the "new freedom" or all four freedoms that would follow the defeat of fascist Germany is being exposed as the regular patriotic poppycock that is handed to oppressed people when their loyal services become necessary to tide the capitalist rulers over a crisis.

### **The Lineup on FEPC**

The attack on Jim Crow in jobs produced the drive for a state-wide Fair Employment Practices law. The reactionary state legislature turned it down several times. Was it just the bad, bad Republicans who blocked a state FEPC? No. The Negro assemblyman from the 62nd district, Gus Hawkins, openly laid the responsibility upon *both* the Democrats and Republicans (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, Feb. 21, 1946).

In the November, 1946, election, Proposition No. 11 for a state FEPC was defeated by the reactionary united front, backed by plenty of money. Leading the fight against it were: the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, the Associated Farmers, the Chambers of Commerce, the *Los Angeles Times* and Hearst. Even the fake-liberal *Daily News* came out against it. Prominent in its support were the trade unions, both AFL and CIO, as well as the Negro organizations. Here over the issue of race discrimination was the basic conflict of Capital and Labor.

The Workers Party backed Proposition 11 all the way. But we know that even an FEPC with a couple of teeth in it cannot begin to clean out an economic system which *needs* race discrimination in order to keep workers divided. The national wartime FEPC showed that.

Roosevelt established the FEPC only at the threat of the March-on-Washington movement headed by A. Philip Randolph, president of the Sleeping Car Porters Union. And then, having headed off this militant revolt for Negro rights, the new FEPC "never received any but token appropriations and never obtained

*full presidential support*" by Roosevelt. This is quoted from the summary made of the FEPC by its own director of field operations, Will Maslow. What is important to remember is that even this concession by the government was made only when the Negro people threatened to take the fight *into their own hands*!

That's the kind of militant action that opens the road to FEPC and to the death of Jim Crow.

### **The Klan Rides Again**

The fight over FEPC brought into town that traveling salesman of race hatred, Gerald L. K. Smith, to do his bit for the Big Business campaign against Proposition 11. Smith is only a visitor to town, but his tie-up with the local Ku Klux Klan revival has been proved.

The underworld character named Ray Schneider who was Smith's bodyguard in Los Angeles has also been exposed as the "Grand Dragon" of the Klan. The Rev. Swift, who spoke for the KKK at the Big Bear lodge of the American Legion, openly stated that "Gerald L. K. Smith is our leader." The Ku Klux Klan, whose post-war revival has made a national scandal, is busy at work in Los Angeles! Testimony has been given that it has 100 groups operating in Southern California, under various names.

*The first fiery-cross burning in Los Angeles proper* took place in May, 1946, on the front lawn of H. G. Hickerson of 134 56th Street, whose family for more than two years has been waging a court battle for the right to live there. They are the only Negro residents on the block and neighbors had brought suits.



Typically, the police belittled the "incident" as a "childish prank," and this has been their standard reaction to Klan outrages. This is nothing but villainous hypocrisy. In the Hicker-son case, for example, not a single neighbor appeared throughout the whole commotion made late at night by radio cars, milling men and photo flash bulbs—an amazing lack of curiosity! The police did not care to explain how playful children put together the large, expertly-carpentered wooden cross. This part of the story goes for most of the 27 cases of Klan activity which have occurred in the city in the past months.

*A few days later, fiery crosses burned again*—one in Eagle Rock, where Grand Dragon Schneider had his KKK post-office address, and another right on the campus of our old acquaintance, the University of Southern California. Here the police trotted out the pat explanation "a student prank"—a student prank which erected a five-and-a-half-foot cross before the Jewish fraternity Zeta Beta Tau, and branded the letters KKK on the lawn in flaming kerosene and in two-foot letters on the wall of the house. The materials for the cross were definitely traced to another fraternity, but to this day neither the police nor the USC has lifted a finger. The university authorities moved only to prohibit a protest rally on the campus.

In June and July again the "prankish children" of the KKK struck. *In case after case their connection with the restrictive-covenant drive was clear to everyone but the guardians of law and order.* Two Negroes, Richard Bates and Fred Mills, are knifed, beaten and their homes set afire after threats by a couple of avowed Klan representatives who warn them "We're going to run the Negroes and Mexicans out of this area." A retired Negro police captain, Homer L. Garrott, has the sinister letters splashed on the sidewalk in front of his house—a house in which he lives only because he fought and won a restrictive-covenant case as the only Negro on the block. With 27 years on the force behind him, Garrott also had to listen to the stupid police explanation, "childish prank."

*The government from the Mayor down has made it plen-*  
*tifully clear that they are not the least bit interested in getting in*  
*the Klan's way.* After the first cases, Mayor Bowron blustered, "I shall not tolerate these outrages." But not a thing was done—not one arrest, not one suspect, not one clue in the "baffling" mystery.

By September Mayor Bowron was bold enough to assert that his "investigations" had shown no sign of KKK activity in Los Angeles. Not a sign! This fine gentleman could not do more for the Klan if he donned a white robe and hood for a City Hall reception.

The KKK weapon is vigilante terror. In the nearby town of Fontana last December the entire family of O'Day H. Short, including two young children, was burned to death at home as the



result of an explosion and fire which an expert investigator described as arson. This followed shortly after warnings from two deputy sheriffs and a real estate broker that the Shorts were "out of bounds" and a vigilante committee was meeting. The government authorities never even pushed an investigation.

*What you see is a united front—police officialdom, government, propertied interests, Klan and vigilante hoodlums—operating in close harmony.* They are making crystal-clear that the Negro people and labor must depend on their own forces and action to defend themselves.

### **The Police Scandal**

That's enough on what the police do NOT do. But the dirtiest story in Los Angeles is the disgraceful record of *police brutality* against the Klan's chief victims, the Negro population.

Just suppose—

You are driving your car down the street, say, near Main and 101st. Two plainclothesmen stop you—because, they explain

later, they think you "look like a suspicious character." Because you are "slow" in getting out of the car as ordered, they set upon you with fists and gun-butts. No charge is laid; you are not even booked; once you've been beaten up, you're released on identification.

**This is not an atrocity tale out of Nazi Germany or Mississippi. This is the story of Dr. Joseph A. Hayes, well known Negro physician who served three years in the Army Medical Corps.**

Scarcely a week passes but that the local Negro press prints one or more shameful reports of this nature. And those that do get printed are usually only the worst in the week's news. The Hayes case is fairly "mild."

In the very same week another veteran, James S. Carter, is arrested for speeding. He apparently *was* speeding. He is therefore beaten up in a squad car, charged with car-stealing for good measure, and the cop in the squad car tells him: "*What we should do is treat the n....rs here like they do in Georgia. Then we wouldn't have any trouble with you n....rs.*"

Here's one that's different. Lynford Johnson, who is a white man, is arrested on June 22 because he is walking along Main near 97th with a Negro friend. The police grill him on the propriety of his association. He is NOT beaten up, just hauled to jail and booked for investigation. After all, he is not a Negro—just walking with one.

Three plainclothesmen break into a house near Central and 42nd looking for a crap game. A crowd gathers to watch the excitement. Finding no crap game, the cops charge into the crowd instead. Mouthing racial insults, one of the officers begins hitting the nearest person with a cane. The victim, Roy Howard, is beaten unmercifully in the sight of all, then shoved into a police



car and driven around for an hour and a half while being beaten and cursed. An officer tells him on the 'ride': "*All I want to do is to take my pistol and whip a n....r to death with it. The only reason I don't is because I might get in a little trouble about it.*" But relax—justice finally triumphs. The victim, Howard, is freed of charges, even though he lands in a hospital. *The officers? Nothing happens to them!*

One more case, of an instructive kind. A 13-year-old boy of Mexican extraction, Eugene Montenegro, is ordered to stop by a deputy sheriff, on suspicion of burglary. He runs. The officer thereupon draws his gun and shoots the boy through the back! This is what is meant by the outcry against the cops who get "trigger-happy" when they enter minority-group districts. And we haven't even mentioned *several* cases of general "shoving around," courtesy, rough handling, and so on.

### **City Hall Slips a Wink to the Cops**

Last January the Mayor's "Committee on Home Front Unity" held a confab with police representatives on the charges of police brutality. All the police could muster was a denial that it is the *policy* of the department to use brutality against minority groups. This stupid defense is only a cover for the fact that the department *tolerates, whitewashes and condones* such action!

Walter Wanger, the motion picture producer and a member of the Committee, contributed the brilliant suggestion that the police should improve its public relations with the Negro press, and a motion was passed. That's all, folks.

All the cases of police brutality we have mentioned took place *after* this conference.

Negro police officers on the force have always been relegated to routine tasks in uniform and neither promoted nor given incentive and opportunity. There has been a steady decline under Bowron's administration in the number of Negroes assigned to the Newton Street detective bureau. When the present crew came into City Hall in 1938, a Negro was acting captain at the station. Now there is not one colored detective-lieutenant there and only two detectives. In the entire force the number of Negro detectives has gone down almost half, and the number of detective-lieutenants to zero. Does anyone think these facts have no connection with the mounting menace of KKKism in the police force?

What does "respect for law and order" begin to mean under such conditions? How can one expect Negroes, who see the hand of the government and its police raised against them every day of their lives, to feel anything but resentment against an authority which oppresses them so cruelly? *Economic exploitation and racial oppression—these are the twin evils of capitalism which produce crime as a blind, anti-social protest against an intolerable way of life forced on subject groups, whether white or Negro.*

### **Poison—Beware!**

Anyone who thinks this is just the Negroes' fight is making the mistake that keeps Jim Crow going and growing.

That goes for white workers who think race prejudice is not their concern. That also goes for Negro workers who come to the conclusion: "The whole white race is my enemy." If *both* sides keep the conflict on a race basis, then Jim Crow wins automatically.

**Let's be practical about it. For Negro workers, race hatred is a club. For white labor, race hatred is a slow poison. The only ones who benefit are those who exploit both. The only hope of victory is through working-class solidarity.**

Negroes belong to a minority group, so called, by virtue of color. But Negro workers (and 90 per cent of Negroes *are* workers) belong to the great MAJORITY GROUP of this country. That great MAJORITY GROUP is the working class, *all* of whom are exploited by the capitalist profit-makers in an economic system that breeds race-hatred along with the profit.

When that MAJORITY GROUP closes its ranks and understands its interests as an awakened CLASS, the Jim Crow system will disappear like its ancestor, the slave system.

That is why the first principle of capitalism is—DIVIDE AND RULE. Set native-born against foreign-born, Jew against Gentile, Negro against white, and laugh your head off while you pick the pockets of all of them.

So the poison of "white supremacy" is carefully pumped into the heads of white workers by the whole machinery of education, movies, radio, newspapers, and so on.

One of the factories of these racial myths is right in our city—the big dream factory known as Hollywood. Here, where the



pap for people's thinking is doctored up and slanted, the Negro people are systematically portrayed only in the role of humble menial, entertainer or Uncle Tom—so that when Europeans met American Negro soldiers in the life they were honestly surprised to find just MEN like themselves.

This is the kind of poison, spread not by the Gerald Smiths and the KKK but by respectable powers in our society like Hollywood and the press, which lies at the bottom of race riots. Los Angeles too has seen these.

There was the pogrom of June, 1943, which the newspapers camouflaged under the name of the "zoot-suit riots." Carey McWilliams described it in his book, *Southern California Country*: "Roaming the downtown streets, a mob of 3,000 hoodlums dragged Mexicans, Filipinos and Negroes from motion-picture theaters and street cars, beat them on the streets and sidewalks and in many cases stripped them of their clothing. During the rioting, policemen watched the violence, made no attempt to intervene, and arrested the victims of the mob after the mob had finally abandoned them."

This, like the notorious Sleepy Lagoon case of August, 1942, involved the Mexican minority mainly, but perhaps even more dangerous have been recent outbreaks of race violence in the public schools directed against Negroes. In January the Gompers Junior High and in July the Manual Arts High School saw vicious attacks by white boys upon colored pupils, and in 1945 there had also been several similar events in schools.

**The racist poison seeps from the top down to those who are the stupidest, most uneducated and fascist-minded, and gives them the idea of venting all their hatreds and fears of insecurity upon minority peoples as scapegoats. If they can even succeed**

in setting one minority against another, then indeed the race-baiters enjoy a good belly-laugh.

Last July many Negroes in Los Angeles received postcards from something called the "Gentile League" warning them to "Beware of the Jews" and "slimy Jewish finance." All this has the same origin as similar propaganda against Negroes. Divide and rule!

The same Jewish fraternity at USC which was the victim of the KKK outrage had itself not long before been one of the signers of the anti-Negro restrictive covenant there. In the same way, Negroes who fall for anti-Semitic or nationalistic anti-white propaganda are digging their own pitfalls. Victory lies only in real unity on class lines—black and white labor fighting together to give the nation's wealth back to the nation's workers.

### Labor Is the Enemy of Jim Crow

This means in the first place a determined struggle inside the trade unions to destroy every sign of Jim Crow in the labor movement. Every Negro worker knows how widespread this disgrace is, especially in the AFL. The fight against it is gaining, nationally and in Los Angeles. The great "Operation Dixie" of the CIO and AFL, the drive to organize Southern labor, is forcing even race-minded AFL craft unions to reconsider their restrictions, because the fight itself makes clear that labor can advance only with racial solidarity.

In Los Angeles the AFL Central Council has taken a step against the great evil through a new Committee to Combat Intolerance and through aid to the East Side Labor Committee. This is still only a token. But this is the direction for the struggle—not to reject the unions with scorn but to fight to make them clean instruments of class solidarity.

Even with the running sore of Jim Crowism in many trade unions, it is the labor movement and only labor which has been the greatest enemy of race discrimination. In Los Angeles, the pressure of the CIO Auto Workers is forcing the auto plants to open the doors to Negro production workers. After a fight by Local 216 and the threat of action by CIO-UAW President Walter Reuther, the General Motors plant in Southgate last July yielded and began hiring Negroes in production departments.

**Labor stands to gain by abolishing Jim Crow—Capital needs**

**the Jim Crow system—this is why the working class movement is basically the ally of the Negro struggle.**

Negroes can no more distrust any white just because he is white than they can trust any Negro just because of his race. It is not a question of color. In the early months of 1946, the Culinary Workers Union started an organization drive in the Central Avenue district. The average wage of culinary workers in this area was 20 to 50 per cent lower than in other sections of the city. Negro employers came forth with the very same arguments for segregation and wage discrimination as their white capitalist brethren.

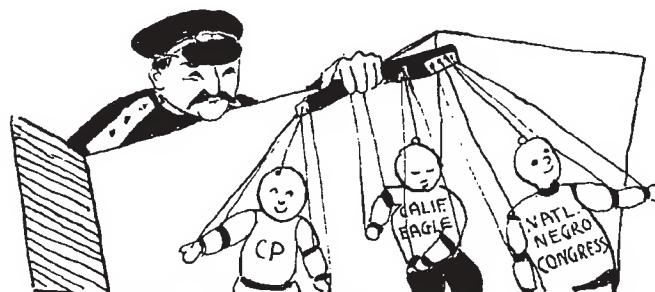
The Central Avenue "community" turned out to be not one but TWO: the community of employers versus the community of labor. Race segregation and Jim Crowism, it was made clear, is indeed in the interests of certain Negro business and professional elements, who use the segregated Negro districts as their own preserves for exploiting the members of their own race. *Black or white, the stream of profit is thicker than the blood stream.*

### The Communist Party Sell-Out

Can we look to the Communist Party to lead the fight?

To many people the Stalinist CP is a puzzle. On the one hand, they remember when the CP used to lead militant struggles like the defense of the Scottsboro boys. On the other hand, more and more Negroes in latter years have been disillusioned as they realize that Uncle Joe Stalin's boys use the Negro question only as a football, as it suits their changes in line.

During the war, for example, the CP line was "National



unity" for the war and soft-pedal the Negro fight. No "fuss" that might "divide the home front." So in the CIO here they voted down resolutions of protest against Jim Crow in the armed forces; they gave up their organization in the South; they liquidated their "National Negro Congress" in Los Angeles and elsewhere; they denounced the March-on-Washington movement because it was too militant. *It was a policy of lying down and keeping mum just when the powers-that-be were most afraid of Negro discontent.*

This sell-out line of the Stalinists wasn't confined to the Negro fight. The CP was telling ALL labor to play dead, not to strike, let itself be kicked around, for the sake of the war.

The key to this "puzzle" is really very simple. The CP line-changers are interested in only one thing: What helps Stalinist Russia's world policy at the moment?

During the Stalin-Hitler alliance, Russia was hostile to American imperialism because it was allied with the Axis. *So—the Stalinists here went all out for militancy, to weaken the American war machine in the interests of the Axis.* Then Russia became an ally of American capitalism, and the Stalinists here followed suit. *So—the line was "no trouble," "national unity," no strikes.* Today Russian imperialism and Wall Street imperialism are again quarrelling over the division of the spoils. *So—the Stalinists once again begin to favor "militancy" against the American capitalists, because they are the agents of the Russian rulers.* They set about reviving their National Negro Congress in Los Angeles, and their local mouthpiece, the *California Eagle*, toes the new line.

This outfit, which still calls itself the Communist Party, is no more "communist" or "socialist" or "red" than the Democratic Party of Bilbo and Rankin is truly democratic. *Socialism or the real communism of Lenin and Trotsky—means political and economic freedom. It is not the totalitarian horror under Stalin in Russia.* We want neither Uncle Toms nor Uncle Joes who wish to use the Negro people as catspaws.

### **Whom Can We Trust?**

By their deeds shall ye know them. They told us "Trust Roosevelt." They tell us "Trust Wallace." They tell us "trust somebody"—but don't you dare take your own fight into your own

hands. We of the Workers Party tell you:

Trust NO ONE, black or white, who promises to "do you good" while YOU sit back and watch. No one ever got his rights handed to him by somebody else!

**YOU have to act. YOU have to join the fight. YOU have to organize, from the bottom up. THEN you will see those who are fighting consistently at your side.**

Here in the Los Angeles city government we have a glaring example of the practical result of supporting capitalist politicians who are elected as "progressives," friends of the people, and so on. The same Mayor Bowron whom we have had to mention so many times was elected to office with the complete support of the CIO leaders, the PAC and the Communist Party!

*This is really an eye-opening fact.* You might say: Well, they got stung. Right, but labor has been getting stung just this way for a couple of hundred years, by supporting "good" capitalist politicians against "worse" capitalist politicians. The capitalists always give you a choice, a better and a worse, and whichever gets in, they are still on top.

It's about time that labor quit wasting votes on any capitalist party and went into politics *for itself*. That means it must organize its own independent political action not to support a Bowron or a Wallace or another "good" capitalist, as the PAC does today, but in order to put *labor's men* in the government. Workers cannot depend on anything but a *workers' government*, which will really oust monopoly-capital and run our economic and political life for the masses of people.

To this end, says the Workers Party, labor must break with



all the Democrats and Republicans and form ITS OWN INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY, based on the trade unions. Only an independent Labor Party which has a sweeping program of basic social change can represent the interests of Negro and white workers in their joint struggle for a world fit to live in.

### **The Final Answer to Jim Crow**

The first answer is a fighting program for immediate action against Jim Crow. Such a program for Los Angeles is on the next page. It is the platform of the Workers Party. It *should* be part of the fight of any organization worth its salt.

But the Workers Party goes *beyond* this first answer. We have already tried to show why. We have tried to bring out that the Jim Crow evil is only a *part* of the greater evil which besets the world we live in. That greater evil is the exploitation of all labor by the small minority of capitalists who control our lives because they are the private owners of the means of life—of the factories, mines, machinery we work on.

**They divide and rule. They wage wars for their profit. They make a farce of democracy. They throw us out on the streets when their system breaks down. The Negro people are victims caught in the gears of the capitalist profit system.**

That is why the Workers Party fights Jim Crow, as part of the fight for a better world for all. That is why the Workers Party was the organization which initiated the struggle against Gerald L. K. Smith in Los Angeles last year. That is why it brings you this pamphlet. That is why its national newspaper, *Labor Action*, hammers away at the race hatred which the capitalists use to hogtie *all* labor.

We stand for the proposition that the workingmen must take the means of production into their own control, under their own ownership—and organize industry through a democratic Workers' Government which will abolish exploitation and profit-squeezing.

This is *economic* democracy, and it is called Socialism.

We believe that those who see straight and fight clear to the end cannot stop at merely patching up evils here and there. They must band together in a fighting vanguard for the radical abolition of capitalism and for a SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY.

**Don't just grumble, curse or weep. Understand, organize and fight! ALL THE WAY—WITH THE WORKERS PARTY!**

## **Plan of Attack on Jim Crow in Los Angeles**

### **DEMAND OF THE GOVERNMENT:**

- (1) Outlaw restrictive covenants—ban any contract based on racial discrimination. Withdraw city building rights and licenses from landlords and real estate companies that practice or organize race discrimination.
- (2) Abolish all race quotas in housing projects, public and private.
- (3) Initiate an adequate low-rent housing program which will permanently alleviate the congestion in the Negro districts.
- (4) Make all race-discriminatory practices by landlords and employers a criminal offense.
- (5) Set up a city Fair Practices Commission on Employment and Housing, with power to put teeth into its decisions, the commission to include representatives of labor and minority groups.
- (6) Demand that the city police and county sheriff authorities cease shielding and giving protection to Ku Klux Klan and vigilante terrorist groups.
- (7) City Council to set up a commission to try police officers accused of racist brutality, with power to fire and institute action against the criminals in uniform, the commission to include labor and minority representatives.
- (8) Immediate appropriations to improve transportation, lighting, recreation and library facilities in the Negro districts.

### **FIGHT IN YOUR TRADE UNIONS AND NEGRO ORGANIZATIONS FOR:**

- (9) Labor and minority groups to organize their own defense formations against vigilante and KKK threats and outrages and fascist campaigns like those of Gerald L. K. Smith.
- (10) Equal rights for members of minority groups in all trade union locals. AFL and CIO Councils to demand the revocation of the charter of any local guilty of race discrimination.
- (11) An independent Labor Party, based on the trade unions—aiming at a Workers' Government and basic social change.
- (12) Get the Negro organizations, and other organizations to which you belong, to adopt these planks as part of their platform and to organize militant action to carry them out.

**AND FOR YOURSELF—**

- (13) Join the socialist vanguard in the Workers Party, to push this program everywhere and to lead the fight for a revolutionary Socialist Democracy!

## READ

### LABOR ACTION

A weekly socialist newspaper with hard-hitting articles on the war and its profiteers, the trade unions, the Negro people, the imperialist intrigues of the Big Powers, and the fight for Socialism.

### PLENTY FOR ALL by Ernest Lund

A basic booklet on socialism. Read it to find out why capitalism cannot give the workers Plenty for All but only wars, depressions, and fascism. Find out how a socialist society would create Plenty for All.

### JOIN US IN THE FIGHT

I want to find out more about the Los Angeles Section of the Workers Party.

.....Send me more literature.

.....Send me notices about your meetings.

.....Tell me how I can join the Workers Party.

Mail to:

Workers Party Your Name .....

Los Angeles Section

316½ West Pico Blvd. Address .....

Room 1

Tel.: Richmond 7-3230 City and Zone .....